

Minority Update

N°21 - September-October- November 2009

United Nations
OHCHR Indigenous Peoples
and Minorities Unit



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New staff in the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities Unit

On 28 September 2009, Ms. Belen Rodriguez de Alba joined the Minorities team, having previously worked in the OHCHR Secretariat servicing Treaty Bodies as well as for OHCHR country offices in Colombia and Guatemala.

Minority Fellowship Programmes 2009 and 2010

The 2009 *Arabic-speaking* fellowship took place from **26 October to 20 November 2009**, coinciding with the 2nd session of the Forum on Minority Issues (see below).

The candidates who participated in the 2009 Arabic- speaking programme were:

- Ms. Haliz Abdulbaqi (Kurd from Iraq)
- Ms. Farahnez Rezaei (Iranian Bahaii from Kuwait)
- Mr. Oubeid Ould Imijine (Haratin from Mauretania)
- Mr. Moustafa Mouammad (Kurd from Syria)
- Mr. Mohamed Badarne (Palestinian from Israel)

The 2010 *English-speaking* fellowship will take place at the OHCHR office in Geneva in April and May 2010. The selection process is at its final stage and the names of successful candidates will be announced in this newsletter and on the website below by the beginning of 2010.

For more details see:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/fellowprog.htm>.

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Regional Expert Consultation on Good Practices in Policing and Minority Communities in Africa

OHCHR organized a "Regional Expert Consultation on Good Practices in Policing and Minority Communities in Africa" on **12-13 October 2009** in Johannesburg, South Africa. The event brought together senior police officers and other experts on policing from Cameroun, Kenya, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda to identify ways to build trust between the police and minorities and to ensure respect for non-discrimination and other human rights in policing.

During the two days, one of the key questions discussed was how to ensure representation and participation of minorities in policing. Participants highlighted a number of good practices that could be expanded. Participants also discussed how to enhance accountability, including through independent complaint mechanisms, as a means to address human rights violations and to build confidence in policing within minority communities. They also examined how to monitor the process of institutional change, including through data collection, clear targets and time-tables.

The consultation, organized in co-operation with the Government of South-Africa, will be followed by similar events in other regions of the world. They will all contribute to a compilation of good practices, to be used as a tool to address minority concerns in policing.

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Independent Expert on minority issues

From 13 to 23 October 2009, the Independent Expert on minority issues, Ms. Gay McDougall, conducted **an official visit to Canada**, visiting Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec. The Independent Expert was pleased to see a richly diverse society including citizens with over 200 ethnic backgrounds, numerous languages, religions and cultural practices. Persons belonging to minorities generally described Canada as a society open to and accepting of cultural, religious and linguistic differences, where they can express their identities, speak their languages and practice their faiths freely and without hindrance.

However, representatives of African and Caribbean Canadians, Asian Canadians and Arab and Muslim communities (officially identified as visible-minorities in Canada) identified a number of issues facing minorities and people of colour that require further attention and action by the Government. These include poverty, issues relating to equality in education such as not taking into account their different cultures of learning, curriculum and textbooks that do not reflect the history or contributions of minorities and high drop-out rates for Black and some other minority children. She also noted that income levels generally are significantly lower, unemployment rates are higher and minorities are disproportionately living in the poorest neighborhoods and in social housing with relatively poor access to services. Poor minority representation was also noted at the federal, provincial and municipal levels in political structures and institutions in Canada.

The Independent Expert will present a comprehensive report on her visit to Canada to the UN Human Rights Council in March

2010. The statement of preliminary findings during this visit can be found at:

http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/minorities/expert/docs/Canada_Statement_231009.doc

The Independent Expert is now preparing for her next official country visit -- to **Colombia** -- which is scheduled to take place in early 2010.

Contact person for more information: Graham Fox: gfox@ohchr.org or minorityissues@ohchr.org

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Forum on Minority Issues

The second Forum on Minority Issues took place on 12 and 13 November 2009 at the United Nations, Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The thematic focus of this year's Forum was "**Minorities and effective political participation**". A background document on "Minorities and Effective Political Participation" and a set of draft action-oriented recommendations were made available to all Forum participants, and constituted the basis for discussions during the two-days. The Forum was extremely well attended with over 500 people accredited. Minority political actors from all regions attended and provided statements based upon their own extensive experience and work to promote the political participation of minorities.

Representatives of more than 100 NGOs working on minority issues also participated. The Forum was attended by UN Member States from all regions, representatives of UN Treaty Bodies and UN Specialized Agencies, participants from regional bodies and mechanisms and academics. Participants from all categories made substantive contributions to the discussions and recommendations.

The Forum seeks to provide concrete and tangible outcomes in the form of thematic recommendations of practical value to all stakeholders. These recommendations will be included in the report by the Independent Expert on the second session of the Forum, which will be presented to the Human Rights Council at its thirteenth regular session in March 2010.

OHCHR also made available for participants a document which provides an overview of the work that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations human rights bodies have carried out on the theme of minorities and the right to effective participation.

The Forum was preceded by two workshops. A preparatory workshop was organized by OHCHR jointly with Minority Rights Group on 11 November for representatives of NGOs and minorities accredited to the 2nd session of the UN Forum on Minority Issues.

Another workshop was organized by OHCHR for invited minority political actors (elected officials as well as NGO representatives) on 11 November 2009, with the objective of discussing prior to the main Forum their own priorities and strategies for increasing minority political participation in countries around the world.

A side event on "**Minority Women and Effective Political Participation**" was organized by Minority Rights Group International (MRG) in collaboration with Gay MacDougall, UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues (IEMI) on 12 November to coincide with the second session of the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues.

A panel of speakers outlined some of the main obstacles to minority women's political participation in three regions of the world. Discussions focused on how these obstacles to effective political participation of minority

women can be overcome and how minority women, their communities, NGOs, Governments and the UN can collaborate to ensure that the right of minority women to effective political participation is realized.

An OHCHR side event took place on 13 November on **"The Minorities Declaration: Challenges and opportunities"**. Six panelists from various regions examined to what extent regional organizations, civil society actors and other stakeholders have been using the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities by key actors, including regional organizations and civil society. The activity was aimed at providing an opportunity for experts, minorities, NGOs and others concerned to examine and encourage the use of the Declaration, in light of its unique status as a key international document providing explicit guidance for the implementation of minority rights.

More information about the second session of the Forum can be found at:
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/minority/forum.htm>.

Contact Email for more information:
minorityforum@ohchr.org

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Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

On 30th November, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Ms. Asma Jahangir, issued a **press release regretting the outcome of the vote on the initiative to prohibit the construction of minarets in Switzerland**. She expressed deep concern at the negative consequences that the outcome of the vote will have on the freedom of religion or belief of members of Muslim community in Switzerland.

On the same topic, The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said she

regretted Switzerland's ban on building minarets, which will be enacted as a result of 29 November's referendum on the subject, adding that such ban is "discriminatory, deeply divisive and thoroughly unfortunate step for Switzerland to take and risks putting the country on a collision course with its international human rights obligations.

The Special Rapporteur conducted an official visit to **the Lao People's Democratic Republic, from 23 to 30 November 2009**.

The Special Rapporteur very much welcomed the fact that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has recently ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which prohibits religious discrimination and unreasonable restrictions on the movements of individuals, including in the exercise of religious freedom.

Ms. Jahangir remained concerned regarding the isolation of religious minorities, who seem to have little or no access to higher education. She also referred to a "glass ceiling in terms of their promotion in public service and their effective participation in decision making." The Special Rapporteur emphasized that members of religious minorities must not be marginalized and she expressed the hope that the growing awareness within the Government of respecting religious diversity will be sustained and fostered. "The test of freedom of religion or belief lies with the level of tolerance extended to religious minorities," she added.

Ms. Jahangir will present her mission report with a detailed analysis and recommendations at the March 2010 session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

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Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

In 2006 the General Assembly (GA) decided that the Human Rights Council (HRC) shall "undertake a universal periodic review, based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfillment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments" (GA resolution 60/251).

At the **HRC's 12th regular session** (14 September to 2 October 2009), the HRC held on 25 September a **general debate** on the UPR. It was noted, inter alia, that the reviews of 80 States had enjoyed 100 per cent participation of States and resulted in a number of commitments, including ratifications of international human rights conventions, strengthening of national human rights institutions and human rights-related projects on the ground. It was also stated that civil society and national human rights institutions played a key role, and all States were encouraged to engage in broad consultation processes at the national level with all relevant stakeholders in accordance with the agreed modalities.

At the **6th session** of the UPR Working Group (WG), which is taking place from **30 November-11 December 2009** in Geneva, the following 16 countries are reviewed: Albania, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Norway and Portugal. The outcomes of the UPR regarding these countries will be adopted at the HRC's 13th regular session in March 2010.

As usual, all available UPR documentation is accessible at:
www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/documentation.aspx.

All UPR meetings are webcasted live and archived at www.un.org/webcast/unhrc.

NGOs are invited to contribute with information for consideration and possible inclusion by OHCHR in a summary of stakeholders' input for future UPR WG sessions. Please note that the page limit for submissions is 5 pages when submitted by individual stakeholders, and 10 pages when submitted by large coalitions of stakeholders. More detailed reports may be attached for reference only. This information will be made available on-line for others to access. A note of information and guidelines for relevant stakeholders on the UPR is available at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBODIES/UPR/Documents/TechnicalGuideEN.pdf. Submissions should be sent to OHCHR at the following email address: UPRsubmissions@ohchr.org.

The 7th and 8th sessions of the UPR WG will be held from **8-19 February 2010** and **3-14 May 2010**. The deadlines for the submission of stakeholders' input for these sessions have passed. The pre-session documentation for the 7th session has been released and is available at the above OHCHR weblink.

The 9th session of the UPR WG is scheduled to take place from **22 November - 3 December 2010**. Submissions from stakeholders are invited by the following deadlines:

· **12 April 2010** for submissions on **Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Maldives, Marshal Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia;**

· **19 April 2010** for submissions on **Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia, Honduras, Jamaica, Mongolia, Panama, United States of America.**

For these and future deadlines ahead see www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NewDeadlines.aspx.

Contact for further details:
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The Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (IGWG) held its seventh session from **5-16 October 2009** at Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Ambassador of Djibouti H.E. Mohamed Siad Douale was elected Chairman-Rapporteur by acclamation.

The Working Group discussed extensively issues related to organizational matters. Furthermore, invited experts made presentations on issues pertaining to migration, protection of children and employment.

E-mail contact for further information:
adusecretariat@ohchr.org

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Treaty Bodies and country reviews

Committee on the Rights of the Child

On 8 and 9 October, OHCHR, **the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other partners** organized a two-day commemoration to mark the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The event brought together more than 500 participants from States parties, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions, international and national non-governmental organizations, children's and youth groups, academics and all others interested in the CRC.

Six working groups discussed a set of recommendations that will guide policy makers and other stakeholders in implementing the CRC. These recommendations will be reviewed and formally adopted by the CRC at its next

session, in January 2010. In the mean time, the draft outcome and recommendations can be used and replicated in events which will be organized world-wide ahead of the 20th anniversary of the Convention on 20 November.

Stakeholders in the field are invited to contribute with additional input and suggestions, which can then be considered by the Committee in their January deliberation and included in the publication dedicated to the 20th anniversary. Inputs and suggestions can be sent to HRTB (CRC secretariat) who will convey them to the Committee.

You can find all the relevant information on the event and the 20th anniversary at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/20thAnnivCRC.htm>

E mail contact for further information:
CRC20Anniversary@ohchr.org

52nd Session- 14 September to 2 October 2009- CRC

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** held in Geneva its 52nd session from **14 September to 2 October 2009** during which it considered State reports of **Philippines, Mozambique, Bolivia, Pakistan and Qatar**. The Committee also reviewed State party reports from **Poland and Yemen** under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and State party reports from **Poland and Turkey** under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

In relation to the report submitted by **Pakistan**, the Committee was concerned at the persistence of discriminatory societal attitudes and discrimination against children belonging to a religious or other minority group, children with disabilities, children living in poverty and children living in rural and remote areas.

The Committee recommended that the State party take all appropriate measures, such as comprehensive public education programmes, to combat and prevent discrimination and negative societal attitudes and mobilize political, religious and community leaders to support efforts to eradicate traditional practices and attitudes which discriminate against children belonging to religious or other minority groups, children with disabilities, and children living in poverty and in rural and remote areas.

The Committee requested that specific information be included in the next periodic report on the measures and programmes relevant to the Convention undertaken by the State party to follow up on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the 2009 Durban Review Conference, taking into account the Committee's general comment No. 1 (2001) on the aims of education (article 29 (1) of the Convention).

In relation to the report submitted by **Philippines**, the Committee reiterated its concern at the lack of disaggregated data by region, gender and age and at the insufficient data on children in need of special protection, in particular, children living in extreme poverty, abused and neglected children, children in conflict with the law and children belonging to minorities and indigenous groups.

The Committee recommended that the State party further expand its existing data collection system and ensure that the data is disaggregated by region, gender and age and that it is updated and includes information on children in need of special protection.

The Committee welcomed the State party's various initiatives to promote and strengthen knowledge about the Convention, including at the local level, but it was concerned that its awareness-raising campaigns and training activities are insufficient to reach all parts of the country, including rural and remote

areas, and to cover all persons working with or for children.

The Committee recommended that Philippines continue to strengthen its awareness-raising campaigns and ensure that such campaigns reach the rural and remote areas, including children belonging to indigenous communities and minorities.

The Committee, while acknowledging steps taken to address the precarious situation of indigenous children, such as the inclusion for the first time of indigenous people's concerns in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010 (MTPDP), reiterated its concern at the widespread poverty among minorities and indigenous peoples and the limited enjoyment of their human rights, in particular, concerning their access to social and health services and education. The Committee was also concerned at the lack of information in the State party report and during the dialogue with the delegation of the actual impact of the application of the 1997 Indigenous People's Rights Act (IPRA) on children.

The Committee recommended that the Philippines take the necessary steps to ensure that indigenous children and children belonging to minorities fully enjoy all of their human rights equally and without discrimination. In this respect, the Committee recommended that the State party strengthen its efforts to implement the IPRA and develop and implement policies and programmes in order to ensure equal access for indigenous and minority children to culturally appropriate services, including social and health services and education. The Committee further recommended that the State party strengthen its mechanisms for data collection on minority and indigenous children so as to identify existing gaps and barriers to the enjoyment of their human rights and with a view to developing legislation, policies and programmes to address such gaps and barriers. Furthermore,

the Committee recommended that the State party raise awareness in communities and schools of the multicultural nature of the Filipino society and the need for education to be sensitive to traditions, languages and views by different ethnic groups.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crc52.htm>

Human Rights Committee

97th Session- 12 to 30 October 2009 - HRC

The Human Rights Committee held in Geneva its 97th session from 12 to 30 October 2009 during which it considered State reports of **Switzerland, Moldova, Croatia, Russian Federation and Ecuador.**

The Committee expressed concern about the sharp rise in apparent anti-Semitic incidents occurring in **Switzerland**. The Committee was also concerned at reports that the police in Geneva have not fully investigated the pattern of these incidents. The Committee recommended that the Swiss state should effectively investigate any and all threats of violence against minority religious communities, including the Jewish community.

The Committee further showed concern with the generally low rate of minorities in the police force, despite the high percentage of minorities in the population at large. The Committee called upon Switzerland to increase efforts to ensure that minorities are adequately represented in the police forces.

In relation to the report submitted by **Moldova**, the Committee expressed its concern at the lack of significant progress in the implementation of many of the Committee's previous recommendations, among those the one relating to the discrimination faced by minorities such as the Roma. The Committee recommended that the State party should

strengthen its efforts to implement the Committee's recommendations in this area.

It is observations on the State party report by the **Russian Federation**, the Committee expressed its concern at reports of an increasing number of hate crimes and racially motivated attacks against ethnic and religious minorities as well as persistent manifestations of racism and xenophobia in the State party, including reports of racial profiling and harassment by law enforcement personnel targeting foreigners and members of minority groups. The Committee was also concerned about the failure on the part of the police and judicial authorities to investigate prosecute and punish hate crimes and racially motivated attacks against ethnic and religious minorities, often qualified merely as "hooliganism", with charges and sentences that are not commensurate with the gravity of the acts.

The Committee recommended that the Russian Federation should make a sustained effort to improve the application of laws punishing racially motivated crimes and ensure adequate investigation and prosecution of all cases of racial violence and incitement to racially motivated violence. Adequate reparation, including compensation, should be provided to the victims of hate crimes. The State party is also encouraged to pursue public education campaigns to sensitize the population on the criminal nature of such acts, and to promote a culture of tolerance. Furthermore, the State party should intensify its sensitization efforts among law enforcement officials, and ensure that mechanisms to receive complaints of racially motivated police misconduct are readily available and accessible.

In relation to the report submitted by **Ecuador**, the Committee, while noting that the specific rights of indigenous peoples are enshrined in chapter IV of the current Constitution, the Committee remained concerned that indigenous peoples and Afro-

Ecuadorians continue in practice to be the victims of racial discrimination. It is also concerned that Title II, article 11.2 of the Constitution does not establish racial non-discrimination as a principle for the exercise of rights

The Committee recommended that Ecuador should take appropriate measures to ensure the practical implementation of the Constitutional and legal provisions that guarantee the principle of non-discrimination against indigenous peoples and full compliance with articles 26 and 27 of the Covenant.

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs97.htm>

Committee against Torture

On 13th October 2009 the **election of 5 members for the Committee against Torture** was held in Geneva. Ms. Saadia BELMIR, Mr. Alessio BRUNI, Mr. Fernando MARIÑO MENENDEZ, Ms. Nora SVEAASS and Mr. Xuexian WANG are the elected or re-elected members of the Committee against Torture for a term of four years beginning 1 January 2010.

43rd Session- 2 to 20 November 2009 - CAT

The **Committee against Torture held in Geneva its 43rd session from 2 to 20 November 2009** during which it considered State reports of **Colombia, Eslovaquia, El Salvador, Yemen, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Spain.**

It is observations on the State party report by **Moldova**, the Committee noted with concern reports of violence and hatred towards minorities, especially Roma, and other vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova. The Committee recalled in light of its *General Comment No. 2* on the implementation of article 2 that the special protection of minorities or marginalized

individuals or groups especially at risk is part of the State party's obligation to prevent torture or ill-treatment.

In this respect, the Committee recommended that Moldova should incorporate in its Criminal Code an offence to punish hate crimes as acts of intolerance and incitation to hatred and violence based on sexual orientation. Moreover, the State party should continue to be vigilant in ensuring that the relevant existing legal and administrative measures are strictly observed and that training curricula and administrative directives constantly communicate to staff the message that incitation to hatred and violence will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned accordingly;

The Committee also requested Moldova to provide detailed information and statistics on the number and type of hate crimes as well as on the administrative and judicial measures taken to investigate and prosecute such crimes and the sentences imposed.

In relation to the report submitted by **Slovakia**, the Committee expressed concern about reports of mistreatment of Roma by police officers during arrest and while in custody. It was also concerned about the high percentage of Roma children in schools for children with mental disabilities. It was further concerned about discrimination against the Roma minority which has led to violations of the rights protected under this Convention.

In light of its *General Comment No. 2* on the implementation of article 2), the Committee recalled that the special protection of certain minorities or marginalized individuals or groups especially at risk is part of the State party's obligations under the Convention. In this respect, the State party should strengthen its efforts to combat ill-treatment of Roma detainees by ensuring the exercise of their legal rights as from the outset of detention; and enforce the School Act No 245/2008 by ensuring that Roma

children are admitted to mainstream education, unless a proper assessment concludes that the child has a mental disability and the child's legal guardian has requested placement into such special schools. Further, in particular it should decouple the term "socially disadvantaged" from the term "mental disability".

More information can be found at:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats43.htm>

Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights

43rd Session- 2 to 20 November 2009- CESCR

The **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** held its 43rd session from 2 to 20 November 2009 during which it considered the **Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Poland, Madagascar and Republic of Korea**.

In relation to the report submitted by **Poland** the Committee continued to be concerned, in spite of the appointment of a Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment in April 2008, at the *de facto* discrimination experienced by some of the disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups, such as ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, and 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons', in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights. The Committee was further concerned that the draft Act "on implementation of some of the EU directives in the field of equal treatment" does not provide comprehensive protection against all forms of discrimination in all areas related to the Covenant rights.

The Committee strongly urged Poland to amend the provisions of the draft Act on "on implementation of some of the EU directives in the field of equal treatment" to conform with the Committee's General Comment No.20 on non-discrimination in economic, social and

cultural rights. The Committee further recommended that the State party ensure effective enforcement of existing anti-discrimination legislation and strengthen measures to combat *de facto* discrimination, including through campaigns aimed at combating stereotypes, especially concerning disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. The Committee invited Poland to include in its next periodic report information on the results of the work undertaken by the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment.

The Committee was further concerned that the distinction between 'National Minorities' and 'Ethnic Minorities' as provided for in the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Language, adopted by the State party in 2005 is discriminatory towards some minorities and that some minorities present in the territory of the State party are excluded from the definition of these two groups, and therefore do not benefit from the implementation of the Act. The Committee further regretted that it has not received information on the implementation of the provision of the Act allowing persons belonging to linguistic minorities to use their own languages as 'auxiliary languages' in dealing with public authorities. (art. 2.2, 15)

The Committee called on the State party to review the criteria used to identify minorities so that all sizeable communities in the territory of the State party are officially recognized under the Act. The Committee requested the State party to include in its next periodic report information on measures taken to implement the recommendation of the Committee in this regard as well as detailed information on the implementation of the Act itself.

The Committee remained concerned that the Roma communities in the State party continue to face widespread discriminations in area such as employment, education, land tenure, access to welfare benefits, housing and health care, which impair the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights.

The Committee reiterated its recommendation to the State party to combat discrimination against the Roma communities in areas such as employment, education, land tenure, access to social welfare benefits, housing and health care. The Committee also urged the State party to take all effective measures for the advancement of Roma communities, including by allocating sufficient funds for the realization of programmes in their favour. The Committee also called on the State party to ensure that the implementation of the various national social inclusion programmes take account of the specific situation of Roma communities in the Poland.

More information can be found at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrs43.htm>

Incoming sessions

11 to 29 January 2010 - CRC

The **Committee on the Rights of the Child** will hold its 53rd session from 11 to 29 January 2010 which it will consider State reports from **Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mongolia, Norway, Paraguay and Tajikistan**. The Committee will also review State party reports from **Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Mongolia and Sierra Leone** under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and State party reports from **Ecuador, Israel, Liechtenstein, Mongolia and Sierra Leone** under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

More information can be found at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/crcs53.htm>

18 January to 5 February 2010 - CEDAW

The **Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women** will hold its

45th session from 18 January to 5 February 2010, during which it will consider State reports from **Botswana, Egypt, Malawi, Netherlands, Panama, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan**.

More information can be found at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/cedaws45.htm>

15 February to 12 March 2010 - CERD

The **Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** will hold its 76th session from 15 February to 12 March 2010, during which it will consider State reports from Argentina, Cambodia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Island, Japan, Kazakhstan, Monaco, Netherlands, Panama and Slovak Republic.

More information can be found at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/cerds76.htm>

16 March to 3 April 2009 - HRC

The 98th session of the **Human Rights Committee** will take place from 8 to 26 March 2010. During the session the Committee will consider the State Party reports of **Mexico, Argentina, Uzbekistan and New Zealand**.

More information can be found at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hrcs98.htm>

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New AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs

On 23 October 2009, at an African Union (AU) Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and International Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa, 17 States signed the **AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa**, known as the Kampala Convention. The Kampala Convention will come into force 30 days after the deposit of instruments of ratification or accession by 15 AU Member States. It has been heralded as the first legal framework of its kind worldwide, and will "promote and strengthen regional and national

measures to prevent or mitigate, prohibit and eliminate the root causes of internal displacement as well as provide for durable solutions". It provides for the obligations and responsibilities of States Parties as well as for the respective obligations, responsibilities and roles of armed groups, non-state actor and other relevant actors, including international humanitarian organizations and the AU.